

CHAPTER 67  
DEVELOPMENT AND MANAGEMENT OF  
RECREATION TRAILS ON STATE LANDS

**571—67.1(456A,461A) Applicability.** This chapter is applicable to all state-owned parks, recreation areas, forests, preserves, game management areas and wildlife areas and public hunting areas under the jurisdiction of the department of natural resources, except those areas under management by a local government entity.

**571—67.2(456A,461A) Definitions.**

*“All-terrain vehicle”* means a two- or three- or four-wheeled motor-driven or human-powered bike designed for all-terrain use including trucks, jeeps and other vehicles registered under Iowa Code chapter 321.

*“Areas”* means any park, recreation area, forest, preserve, game management area, wildlife area or public hunting area under the jurisdiction of the department of natural resources.

*“Department”* means the department of natural resources (DNR).

*“Director”* means the director of the department of natural resources or designee.

*“Division administrator”* means the division administrator of the DNR division responsible for managing the area in question.

*“Equestrian”* means horserider or horseback riding.

*“Horse”* means any equine animal including horses, mules, burros, donkeys, and all llamas or alpaca-like animals.

*“Incidental use”* means riding horses on all areas to travel from designated watering stations to trailheads; leaving a trail to rest; allowing others to pass; participating in an authorized field trial; hunting between the dates of August 1 and March 15; and individual, nonorganized pleasure riding between August 1 and March 15 where no formal trails have been designated, but where riding is permitted, and no more than four individuals are riding together. *“Incidental use”* also means bicycle riding on permanently established service roads on wildlife management areas where no formal trails have been designated but where riding is permitted and no more than four individuals are riding together.

*“Snowmobile”* means any vehicle registered under Iowa Code chapter 321G.

**571—67.3(456A,461A) Purpose.** The purpose of this rule is to establish guidelines for developing and properly managing the use of recreation trails on state parks, recreation areas, forests, preserves, game management areas, wildlife areas and public hunting areas.

**571—67.4(456A,461A) Establishment of trails.** Establishment and designation of recreation trails shall not be undertaken until after a plan showing basic design, location and designated use for any such trail has been prepared. The division administrator shall approve of all trail plans for areas under the administrator’s supervision and trails shall follow only those routes designated on the plan.

**571—67.5(456A,461A) Designation of recreation trails.** All trails shall be designated by the department. Designation shall include an assignment of the use or uses for which each trail is intended. Uses shall be classified as follows: foot traffic, horseback riding, snowmobiling, cross-country skiing, bicycling and multiple-use trails. The intended uses of trails shall be described on signs at appropriate locations within the area, in informational brochures about the area, or on posted notice at the area’s headquarters. No trails shall be established for all-terrain vehicles except human-powered bikes.

**571—67.6(456A,461A) Guidelines for trail location.** Trails constructed and designated on any area shall be subject to the following guidelines and no trail shall be constructed:

1. On any slope where erosion will occur unless measures are taken to permanently control erosion. The measures may include, but not be limited to: water bars, steps, vegetative or crushed stone surfacing and terraces;
2. Through rare or sensitive plant communities except for trails intended for interpretive purposes and designed for foot traffic only;
3. In locations where wildlife management practices are being carried out that would be negatively affected by trail activity;
4. To pass over archaeological sites, upon or within 50 feet of known archaeological sites eligible for the National Register of Historic Places or known sites not yet evaluated, except for trails intended to lead to a site for interpretive purposes;
5. Where past trail use has resulted in erosion or other environmental damage that would be exacerbated by continued trail use;
6. So as to allow travel through a river, stream or wetland or waterway except at designated crossings.

**571—67.7(456A,461A) Control of trail use.**

**67.7(1)** Use of trails may be temporarily limited or suspended by the area manager when use or any natural event has created conditions that will cause the trail to degrade if further use is allowed. Guidelines may include, but are not limited to, the following:

- a. After a rainfall event or during thawing of sufficient amount to create significant potential erosion.
- b. When the surface of the trail has eroded more than 6 inches and it is evident that active erosion is occurring.
- c. When trail use has deviated from the established trailway and is resulting in off-trail impacts.
- d. In locations where wildfire has destroyed ground vegetation.
- e. When the volume of use has damaged a trail beyond normal wear.
- f. When conflicts between trail users occur.

**67.7(2)** The area manager shall limit or suspend use of a trail by posting signs at appropriate trail-heads and by posting notices in conspicuous locations within the area.

**67.7(3)** Upon suspension or limitation of trail use, the area manager shall take prompt and reasonable steps to correct the conditions that led to suspension or limitation. When, in the area manager's judgment, such conditions have been corrected, normal use of the trail may resume.

**67.7(4)** No trail shall be permanently closed to public use without approval of the director. Recommendations for permanent closure shall be made to the division administrator by the area manager. The division administrator shall prepare a report documenting reasons for closure and provide the report and recommendation to the director. At the request of six or more persons, the director shall direct that a public informational meeting be held in the vicinity of the area to inform the public of the planned closure and to receive public comments. A summary of the public comments made at the meeting shall be presented to the natural resource commission for review. The commission may uphold or reverse the director's decision and shall consider both public comments and staff recommendations before taking action.

**571—67.8(456A,461A) Use of designated trails.**

**67.8(1)** Bicyclists, equestrians and snowmobile operators shall use only trails officially designated and properly signed for such uses. No person riding a horse or bicycle shall leave the designated trailway except for incidental use, as defined in this rule. The area manager may temporarily close an area to incidental use by posting the area; however, no area shall be permanently closed without approval of the director.

**67.8(2)** Unless otherwise prohibited by law, the use of motorized all-terrain vehicles shall be limited to roadways on all areas except as necessary to carry on authorized activities such as area management, agricultural activity, search and rescue operations and special events authorized by the department.

**571—67.9(456A,461A) Existing trails.** Trails in use at the time of adoption of this rule shall be reviewed and approved or disapproved by the division administrator within six months of the effective date of this rule. Review and approval or disapproval shall include the preparation and submittal of plans to the division administrator by area managers. The division administrator shall provide a report to the director of trails approved within areas under the administrator's supervision.

These rules are intended to implement Iowa Code sections 455A.5, 456A.24 and 461A.35.

[Filed 1/6/89, Notice 11/2/88—published 1/25/89, effective 3/1/89]

[Filed emergency 3/9/89—published 4/5/89, effective 3/10/89]

[Filed 7/7/89, Notice 5/31/89—published 7/26/89, effective 8/30/89]

[Filed 11/15/96, Notice 10/9/96—published 12/4/96, effective 1/10/97]

CHAPTERS 68 to 70

Reserved